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Hero: an  
Eyewitness

# Forgotten Hero of Watergate

## Break-in

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Report by Frank  
Wills

(originally by Cimons)

WASHINGTON — The name Frank Wills does not evoke instant recognition; at best, its mention produces a feeling of vague familiarity. Yet, when the complicated history of Watergate is permanently recorded, his name will almost certainly appear.

Wills, the security guard who discovered and reported the June 17, 1972, Watergate break-in at the Democratic National Committee, says he is not looking for immortality, nor even much current glory. He does feel, however, that his role has somehow been lost within the epic proportions of the scandal and that he has been forgotten.

"When you're black and you do something wrong, everybody's always criticizing loud, but when you're black and do something good, nobody pays any attention," Wills said quietly, in the mild drawl of his native Georgia.

Shy and somewhat uneasy, he is not particularly comfortable talking about himself. "I don't like to," he said. "It's not good to let anybody know you completely."

He is 25, a bachelor who lives alone in a one-room apartment, and until several weeks ago, existed on \$65-a-week unemployment compensation because he couldn't find a job. He is boyish and slender, with a thin mustache and features marred only by a small scar above his left eye, a reminder of a childhood fall from the roof of his Savannah house.

"Everybody says I started it all, that I saved the country," Wills said. "It makes me angry that I couldn't even get a job after all that."

He left his Watergate post six months after the break-in and took another one as a security guard with a realty company.

He was fired in June, he said, because he took two days off to visit his home in the South. After that, he said, no one would employ him because, he suspects, of his connection with the Watergate affair.

"The man proved himself a good security guard, but no one would hire him for the longest time after that because he was a hot potato," said Dorsey Evans, his attorney, who seems more eager than his client to show anger over Wills' treatment.

Several places where he looked for work, Wills said, were nervous about publicity, and officials at one school where Wills applied for a job told him they were afraid the school might lose its federal funding if he were to work there. Finally, several weeks ago, he was hired as a guard at an office building in suburban Virginia.

He refused to name it and would not discuss his salary. "Just say it's a lot more than I was getting at the Watergate (\$80 a week)," he said.

Evans, who says he is around to make sure Wills is not exploited, agreed with his client that public reaction might have been different if Wills were white.

"Someone like Mark Spitz goes over there, wins a whole bunch of gold medals and comes back here acclaimed as a hero," Evans said. "He gets on television, does commercials and everyone makes a big deal over him. Frank uncovered a scandal and instead of getting plaques from the community and a good job, everybody wants to forget him."

In an effort to make sure Wills isn't forgotten, the two have put together a pamphlet called "The Watergate Hero: an Eyewitness Report by Frank Wills" which is being sold for \$2. It is published by Wil-Van, Inc. at the same office address as Evans' law offices, and describes the security guard's background and the events of June 17, 1972.

Among the last pages are photographs of Wills and Evans, and a list of Watergate-related indictments. Also, in the immediate months following the break-in, Wills was reportedly charging the press up to \$300 for interviews, which Evans termed "honorariums."

"We look at it as paying for Frank's time," Evans said.

Outwardly, Wills shows no personal bitterness and is reluctant to call himself a hero. "No," he said. "I was a working person doing a job."

He is far more willing to express his fury with the

Nixon Administration, particularly the President, over the enormity of the scandal and what he sees as the inequities of a system that favors public officials over the ordinary citizen.

"I want to see him out, period. He should resign or be impeached," Wills said. "I think people are just sick and tired of him and the Godlike manner in which he lives, with San Clemente and all his other deals of luxury. It makes me angry."

"I pay taxes like anyone else. My taxes pay his salary. And what do we get? Law and order that goes against the little man but means nothing to high government officials. They lay down the laws, expect everybody to abide by them, and then break them themselves."

He smiled. "But I don't think he's getting away with it anymore," he said. "Nixon's got fire on his feet now, and he's got to jump up and down to find a cool spot."

Wills, who quit school after the 11th grade to join the Job Corps, came to Washington in April, 1971, just to visit. He liked the city and was placed with the General Security Service through an employment agency. He was assigned the midnight-to-7 a.m. shift at the Watergate complex.